Love Live! Sunshine!! School Idol Diary: Kanan / Dia / Mari

Aqours' Sea Side Diary - Kanan

I'm Always Number Two

My house is on an island off the coast of Uchiura.
There used to be a ropeway that could take you across the sea and to the mainland, but one day, it broke down from age, and ever since then, the boat's been the only way to get on or off the island.
But, the island is right there in plain sight, well within swimming distance, so the trip takes just 3 minutes by boat.
Feels like you just step on, then step right off♪
And on that island - it's called Awashima - There's a quiet, local diving shop.
That's my house.

The shop is staffed by my grandfather, the instructor/owner, along with his assistant/granddaughter, me.
It's a little shop run just by us two, but apparently it operated on a larger scale back in the day, when my parents were still around. But, now that they're gone, my grandfather really just runs the store as a hobby now.
My parents, who were supposed to inherit the shop from my grandfather, well, they liked diving a lot, too.
They loved beautiful seas, which is why they moved to Ichiomote Island, part of the Yaeyama archipelago in Okinawa.
Now, they run a diving shop over there.
But, that's just the way things are.
Nowadays, the waters of the Suruga Bay here in Ito have grown clearer and prettier than they used to be, and in there, you can find the impressive striked beakfish the and cute pearl-spot chromis swimming in schools, as well as rays, and even sunfish, if you're lucky.
But, they just can’t compare to the coral reefs of Okinawa♥
Of course, I love the beautiful seas too, and I couldn't decide whether or not to go with them, but the problem is, there's no high school over there, so I ended up staying here.
Besides, I'd be worried, leaving my grandpa here by myself.
My grandfather is a veteran in the business, one of the first divers in Japan, and he used to publish underwater photo collections. Every now and then, people show up because they want to dive with him or because they heard he could give them diving lessons, so typically, he has dives scheduled each weekend.
So, I'm always helping him out with that.

Here's how a weekend goes for me at the diving shop.
First, I wake up early in the morning and count the new air tanks that came in yesterday.
Then, I check the weather.
Once I record the wind direction, wave height, air temperature, and water temperature in the logbook, I change into my wetsuit and start the engine on the jet skis.
I go to check the diving spot for the day.
I do bring a little air tank with me, just in case, but it's not that deep, so I just free dive, wearing only some weights around my waist.
When it's just 10 meters or so, that's how I always do it.

With my mask and snorkel on, I stretch my body out and bring my arms together above my head as I face the sea floor.
I quietly steady my breathing as my body bobs on the surface like a raft.
Once I can hear my own breath hissing through the tube of my snorkel between the splashing of the waves, that's the sign that I'm ready to dive.

Then I bend my body at a sharp 90 degree angle, as if bowing, and cut a path into the water.
It's like slicing into a giant mass of water. It feels so good to do a jack knife dive into the sea.

In this world, surrounded by water, I'm instantly enveloped in a silent stillness.
On the first dive of the morning, the water is really just so clear and beautiful.
The water's chilly, like spring came 2 months late, but that doesn't even bother me now.
Diving straight down, I scan the sea floor in search of my destination.
The typical landmark I look for is a large rock. A school of fish are playing there.
Shining waters clearer than anywhere on the west coast, ivory-white coral reefs, and the colorful southern fish... would make for far better scenery than this.
But, when I'm down here, the sapphire-colored waters of Uchiura look pretty good, too♪ I think to myself as I watch the clownfish play among the sea anemones growing in the crevices.
I check several points, looking for anything unusual or dangerous.
With the octopuses hiding beneath large rocks, striped beakfish slowly swimming about, and the neverending swarms of flathead mullets making slick black streamlines through the water, the seas of Ito have some charm of their own.
If nothing's amiss, I send up my buoy with its flag, drop my weights, and call it day.
Grandpa should be coming over with his customers after noon, I think to myself.

I kick my flippers, heading for the shining surface.
I'm there.
As soon as my head pushes through that light, a loud splash enters my ears.
And, with it, the sound of waves, the sound of wind, the cries of seagulls, and distant steam whistles.
In one moment, I've returned from the stillness in the water and into the world filled with sound.
It's always a jarring moment, when I realize that I've been travelling through a different world.

But, on that day, something else also happened at that moment.
"Ooh, there you are♥ Hey, Kanan! Over here, over here! Over here!!"
I hear someone's voice ringing out.
I grab onto the little buoy and turn to look at the glittering beach.
But, I already know who that voice belongs to before I turn around.
There's only one person crazy enough to call out to me while I'm this far offshore, and underwater to boot.

Someone with a voice that's loud enough - unbelievably, thunderously loud enough - to travel all the way from the shore to me.

Spinning around, I lightly kick my fins again, trying to push myself as far out of the water as possible, and slowly wave to her.
I don't say a thing.
The reason is, I'm not so sure I can yell loud enough for Chika to hear me from so far away.
And then...
"Hey, can you come over here!? Let's play!" Chika half sings, half shouts to me as she jumps about the beach. Instead of shouting back, I signal OK to her by making a large circle above my head with my arms, and start swimming over.
Ah, it takes me back.
When we were little, Chika would call to me like this all the time.